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The Last True Bard



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Chapter 1 by Artis Planeswalker

"Mär Sivas. Mär Volas. Mär Therin." I see you. I hear you. I know you. The first time I heard those words I was twelve and just entering my first year of training as a true Bard of Caer Ynis. Usually someone of my age wouldn't have been excepted into Caer Ynis the island fortress, the masters prefer younger students who are easily molded and not already as headstrong as I was.

Headstrong, I remember fondly just one of the many names I have aquired over the years. Since then I have earned both famously and infamously more titles than I care for: gods dreamer, lover, the sword and the flame, immortal, and worst of all betrayer.

Come you who are willing, brave of will and strong of heart. Come and hear the tale of Hargrove last Bard of Caer Ynis.

Chapter 2 by Zoriex



The night I had been deemed a traitor I'd been spinning a tale of knights and dragons in front of a bonefire. With an audience of both young and old, I captivated their hearts, minds, and ears with my dramatic music and deep voice.

And some the last words of the song I had the last night before being banished from Caer Ynis and the night The spell I had cast on the last Bard of Caer Ynis had been lifted.

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Confusion to be overcome

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My former audience quickly began rising to their feet and soon frightened cries began rising into the air.

"Banshees!" someone screamed and that was all it took for the villagers that had been once been enraptured by my music to take flight.

Banshees, I thought with wonder. It had been decades since the last banshee call I'd heard and witnessed.

Those screams only meant one thing:

People were going to die tonight.

Chapter 3 by Magnificat



I slowly stood, watching people scrabble in all directions through the great hall, but I knew that there was reason to flee. A banshee only came for the person who was going to pass, and everyone else would be safe.

Well, "safe". Everyone who saw the banshees would be terrified for weeks afterwards.

I listened closely to the screams. The villager was right, it did sound as though there was more than one out in the woods, moving closer toward the castle. I could distinguish at least two different screams, maybe even three. Though it was strange to hear the keening of more than one banshee, I knew from the tales that it could happen when someone great and important was their target-- or if more than one person was slated to die.

I walked over to the long head table and poured myself a brimming goblet of port wine. The best thing to do would be to wait and see what happened. The hall had cleared except for a few cowering servants who had no other place to go, and the screams were coming closer.

There were more than a few benefits to being centuries old; one of them was that you don't sweat the small stuff like killer bags, and another was that you can't outrun your fate.

But as I waited, I started to think. I mean, I'm not immortal, and I'm not invincible. I'm not invincible. What if one of the

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I focused, muttered a few of the ancient words, and spoke the name of a village craftsman I met earlier in the day. My nose lengthened, my face reddened, my hair grizzled and frizzed. I drained the goblet of wine and pretended to be drunk under the table. When the banshees entered, I would be able to see the action up close.

Chapter 4 by Opulence



No a moment after I had disguised myself, the door was dragged open by a set of withered, discerningly long fingers.

From my seat under the table, slumped over in a "drunken stupor" I saw the hunched figure of a banshee skulk into the room. It's hollow sunken eyes were rolled over white, it was deeply focused on something. As I eyed over this new patron to the great hall, another Banshee crept into the room. The fur on it's hunched back gave the impression of a coat, covering the grey skin stretched over a malformed skeleton. Their grey hair hung low around their claw like fingers. As I peered up at these horrific beasts, yet another Banshee entered. Now three, seven foot tall walking horrors were in the hall, and in my surprise three more entered.

This was a problem, Banshees never hunted in packs. This was new to me, I watched the Banshees walk around the great hall and what they did did not help alleviate the feeling of confusion. They each went over to someone in the halls picked them up and looked at them. Rather than sinking their needle like array of teeth into the people's horrified flesh, they simply dropped them and moved on to the next person. Eventually, my turn came around, the corpse like figure picked me up and stared at me. It's glassy white eyes were like marbles, staring into my very soul. Then I heard it, like a raspy whisper into my very skull.

"HARGROVE"

It was a question. It looked at my disguised face while I attempted to maintain the drunken terror in my expression. However, the whole time, all I could think was "why me?". Surely, I wasn't that important, the only thing i had to my name was being a bard Caer Ynis. The last bard of Caer Ynis.

The Banshee dropped me, as my head spun with questions. They Banshees appeared to have finished searching the great hall, and filed themselves out of the room. Just before they left, the

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Thunder

I HAVE TO FIND HARGROVE

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And with that, they were out of the hall. My features morphed back to their usual self as I noticed that all the eyes in the room were on me. I looked around as expectant looks met my gaze.

"Rest easy, I will take care of this" I said, the boldness of my voice not betraying my confusion. As I walked for the door, i thought to myself, if I were a Banshee, how would I find a bard in hiding? Then it clicked, and I was suddenly very worried for everyone in the town. I rushed out the door, I had a duty to fulfill.

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